



**Constitution
and
By-Laws of the
Kent Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.**

PREAMBLE TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Kent Fire Association of Kent, Connecticut, incorporated under the laws of the State of Connecticut, and having the power accorded it in its charter to form a Fire Company, voted at a meeting held Monday evening, December 14, 1914, that the Kent Fire Association recommend and authorize the formation of the Kent Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.

The Kent Hose Company, organized August 3, 1911, became the Kent Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. subject to the following Constitution, which was adopted December 14, 1914, with subsequent amendments April 1, 1946; October 4, 1960; May 7, 1973; March 1, 1976, December 1, 1980; December 2, 1991; November 1 1993; May 1, 1995; February 5, 1996; December 2, 1996; January 5, 1998; October 5, 1998; August 2, 1999; January 6 2003; March 1, 2004; December 6, 2004; June 6, 2005; June 5, 2006; May 7, 2007 April 6, 2009, Dec. 6, 2010, June 2013, June 2014, June 5, 2017 & December 4, 2017; June 4, 2018, December 3, 2018; June 3, 2019; December 7, 2020.

KENT VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I: NAME

The organization shall be known as the Kent Volunteer Fire Department, Incorporated – hereinafter referred to as the Department.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

The purpose of the Department shall be the preservation and the protection of life, limb and property from fire and other hazards worthy of the Department's attention.

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: Eligibility Any person residing in or near the Town of Kent who desires to cooperate with the Department in carrying out the purposes of the Department is eligible for membership if such person is of good moral character and meets the physical requirements set forth by the Department. The Department has a number of different types of membership.

Section 2: Active Emergency Members There shall be no limit to the number of active emergency members. To be an active emergency member, one must be at least 18 years old, pay annual dues, and successfully complete the following mandatory training activities:

- Initial certification in Airborne Pathogens
- Initial certification in Bloodborne Pathogens
- Initial certification in Hazardous Materials Awareness
- FEMA "IS-100 Introduction to Incident Command System"
- FEMA "IS-700 National Incident Management System (NIMS), An Introduction"
- Annual recertification in the calendar year is required in Airborne Pathogens, Bloodborne Pathogens and Hazardous Materials

Active emergency members are expected to respond to emergency calls.

The Executive Committee shall conduct a review in January of active emergency members who fail to meet the annual requirements. If participation does not meet the requirements and no special circumstances exist, the member is to turn in all emergency-related equipment issued by the Department (pager, blue light permit, etc.) and he/she becomes a non-emergency member. If the member has served 10 years, he/she will be notified of veteran member eligibility.

Any member may request in writing from the Department a leave of absence, but he/she shall be placed on the non-emergency list for the duration.

Section 3: Active Associate Emergency Members Active Associate Emergency Members are those members whose full-time affiliation is with a neighboring department. These members must be a member in good standing in their full-time department. A letter from the neighboring department's Chief to this effect is required with their application and copies of their certifications. These members must be 18 years old and pay annual dues. These members' sole purpose in the Kent Volunteer Fire Department is to train and respond to emergency calls, and they are ineligible to hold office and they have no vote.

It is understood that these members may fulfill their minimum training requirements of airborne pathogens, bloodborne pathogens, Hazardous Materials, FEMA ICS 100 and FEMA ICS-700 initial

certifications and refreshers in their full-time department. Each year a letter is required from their full-time department's Chief or Training Officer stating that these training requirements have been met within the calendar year, or an Active Associate Emergency Member can also fulfill these requirements by participating in the courses offered by the Kent Volunteer Fire Department. PPE equipment is to be supplied by the member's full-time department, except when duties responding to Kent calls require equipment not supplied by the full-time department.

The Executive Committee shall include Active Associate Emergency Members in their annual review. An Active Associate Emergency Member who fails to meet the annual requirements, and no special circumstances exist, is to turn in any equipment issued by the Department and cease responding to calls. The member has six months to provide the necessary requirements, or the member will be dismissed by the Executive Committee as an Active Associate Emergency Member and a letter to this effect will be sent by the Executive Committee to the member and the member's full-time department.

Section 4: Non-Emergency Members

Non-emergency members are those members who do not respond to emergency calls and have no vote. If a non-emergency member does not take action to become recertified or change his/her type of membership in two calendar years, he/she shall be discharged as a member of KVFD and a letter shall be sent by the Executive Committee to this effect. Any past Fire Chief who has been in the Department for ten or more years is eligible to remain on the non-emergency list indefinitely.

Section 5: Veteran Members

Any member who has served as an active emergency member for 10 years may request by letter to the Department that he/she be awarded veteran status. Such request shall be voted on at the next regular meeting. The Secretary shall notify the member of the Department's action. A veteran member is a member in good standing, having all rights and privileges including, but not limited to, permits and insurance except that such member shall be ineligible for any office, with the exception of President, Secretary, and Treasurer, has no vote, pays no dues and cannot respond to emergency calls. Any veterans serving on the Executive Committee shall have the right to vote at all meetings.

Section 6: Auxiliary Members

An auxiliary member is not required to maintain any special training. Duties may include serving on the Department fundraising committees and support functions at incidents, such as procurement and preparation of food and drinks, liaison to coordinate and bring in supplies and any other efforts in support and for the benefit of the Department (see SOP 1-6).

Section 7: Junior Members

Junior members are youths age 14 through 17. The Department Junior Program is offered to give young people the opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge about fire and emergency medical services. All Junior operations are overseen by the adult advisors, who are members of the Department. Procedures are established by the Department Juniors By-laws, with approval from the Department. Amendments to Junior By-laws should be presented to the Department at least one month prior to the vote. Junior members have no vote at the Department meetings. Dues and responsibilities are set by the Juniors By-Laws.

Section 8: Honorary Members

Individuals upon whom the Department wishes to confer special honor may be elected as Honorary Members by a two-thirds vote of all active members voting at a regular meeting. Honorarium does not confer any rights and privileges.

ARTICLE IV: OFFICERS

Section 1: The elected officers of the Department shall consist of a Fire Chief, President, two Assistant Fire Chiefs, an Ambulance Chief, an Assistant Ambulance Chief, two Captains, two Lieutenants, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and an Engineer.

Section 2: To be eligible for Captain, Assistant Fire Chief or Fire Chief, an individual must have held the previous rank for a minimum of 12 months, effective January 2014. To be eligible for Fire Chief, an active emergency member must have served as an Assistant Fire Chief. To be eligible for Assistant Fire Chief, a member must have served as Captain. To be eligible for Captain, a member must have served as Lieutenant and completed FEMA IS-800 "National Response Plan: An Introduction." To be eligible as a Lieutenant, a member must be Connecticut certified as Firefighter I and Department certified to operate all current Department equipment and licensed to drive/operate all Department trucks (see SOP 2-5 and SOP 2-9). In order to serve as Lieutenant, a member must complete FEMA ICS-200 "Basic Incident Command System." To be eligible as President, a member must have served a minimum of five years as an active emergency member.

Section 3: To be eligible for Ambulance Chief, a member must be Connecticut certified as an EMT or higher and must have served as an active emergency member with said certification for three years and must have completed FEMA ICS-200 "Basic Incident Command System." To be eligible for Assistant Ambulance Chief, a member must be Connecticut certified as an EMT-B or higher and must have served as an active emergency member with said certification for three years and must have completed FEMA ICS-200 "Basic Incident Command System."

ARTICLE V: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1: There shall be an Executive Committee consisting of the President, Secretary, Treasurer, Fire Chief, Ambulance Chief, Assistant Fire Chiefs, an Assistant Ambulance Chief, Captains, and Lieutenants.

Section 2: Standing Subcommittees

- a. A Personnel Committee shall consist of the President, Fire Chief and Ambulance Chief and shall be a standing subcommittee.
- b. A Standard Operating Procedures committee shall be appointed by the President and reviewed annually.

ARTICLE VI: APPOINTED POSITIONS

Section 1: The Fire Chief shall appoint a Training Officer annually and a Safety Officer per scene as needed.

Section 2: The Executive Committee shall annually appoint a Quartermaster, Financial Secretary, Records Clerk, Equipment Loan Officer, Technology Officer, Communications Officer, Firehouse Coordinator, Senior Advisor and Advisory Board for the Juniors and Auxiliary Coordinator.

Section 3: The Ambulance Chief may appoint an EMS Supply Officer, an EMS Training Officer and other assistants as necessary.

ARTICLE VII: ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting for the election of officers, and the transaction of other business, shall be the January meeting of each year.

ARTICLE VIII: AMENDMENTS

The Constitution may be amended two times a year, in June and the December meeting. at the meetings, by two-thirds vote of the active emergency members present and voting, under the following provisions: that the proposed amendment has been presented in writing two months prior and notice has been sent by mail or electronic mail to each active emergency member that such action will be taken.

KENT VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: Application Any person desiring to become an active emergency member shall review the Department Constitution and By-Laws, submit a written application to the Secretary signed by a Department sponsor, accompanied by an initiation fee of \$10.00, a photocopy of his/her valid driver's license or ID for a background and DMV check, and the specified medical forms completed by a physician. A Department sponsor is an active emergency member, not on probation, who will mentor and assist the new member through the probationary period.

Any youth applying to be a Junior member, shall submit an application to the Junior Advisory Board members, one of whom shall serve as each Junior member's sponsor.

Any person applying to become an active auxiliary member shall submit an application to the Secretary accompanied by an initiation fee of \$10.00.

All applications shall be referred to the Executive Committee for investigation and a favorable or unfavorable recommendation made to the Department. The application shall be voted upon at the next monthly meeting by secret ballot or voice vote. A simple majority carries. Applicants (except Auxiliary) who are approved shall serve a one-year probationary period. An active auxiliary or junior member is a member who participates in work details, fundraising events, and social functions as set forth in the Department Work policy and Directive and as assigned by the Chief and is otherwise compliant with said Policy and Directive.

Section 2: Duties It shall be the duty of all active emergency members to obey all commands of the officers while on duty, to be prompt at all meetings and to respond to a call without delay and follow the Department's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Section 3: Discipline Any member guilty of conduct unbecoming a member of the Department while on duty, or any member violating the Constitution and By-Laws, shall be subject to discipline by the Executive Committee. Additionally, an active member shall be subject to discipline for failure to follow a lawful order of a superior or for violation of a Department Policy and Directive.

If a member is charged with a felony crime, defined by federal or state statutes, the Executive Committee shall notify the membership and may recommend suspension of the member. If suspended, the member shall not be allowed to participate in any emergency or non-emergency Department functions. If a member is convicted of a felony, a vote shall be taken by the membership, by secret ballot, to terminate his/her membership.

Upon the receipt of a written complaint against a member of the Department for conduct unbecoming a member while on duty or for a violation of the Constitution or By-Laws, the Executive Committee shall notify the accused member in writing of the specific accusation. He/she shall be given the opportunity to be heard before the Executive Committee regarding the same. After consideration, the Executive Committee shall have the power to act as follows:

- a. Dismiss the complaint.
- b. Place the accused member on probationary status for a period not to exceed one year. The membership, by secret ballot, may dismiss a member who has been so placed on disciplinary probation and is found to be guilty of another infraction. During the probationary period, the member may not hold office.
- c. Suspend the member, in the event a member fails to respond to the Executive Committee's request for a meeting, until the matter is resolved.
- d. Recommend to the Department that the member be dismissed.
- e. Notify the membership at the next regular meeting of all disciplinary action by the Executive

Committee.

The Department, at its next regular meeting, shall act upon any recommendation by the Executive Committee.

ARTICLE II: INITIATION FEES AND DUES

There shall be an initiation fee of \$10.00 and annual dues shall be \$10.00, payable at the Annual Meeting. For an active member to be in good standing, dues must be paid by April 15th of the current year.

ARTICLE III: DUTIES OF OFFICERS

All officers will follow the current National Incident Management System procedures and perform their duties as follows.

Section 1: Fire Chief It shall be the duty of the Fire Chief to exercise general supervision of the Department, carrying out and enforcing the Constitution and By-Laws.

- a. *Appointments* The Fire Chief shall appoint and oversee a Training Officer whose duties shall be established by written policy.
- b. *Oversight* The Fire Chief shall oversee all line officers.
- c. *Training* The Fire Chief shall ensure that adequate training is available to members.
- d. *Operations* The Fire Chief shall be responsible for all non-EMS emergency operations, including supervision of equipment maintenance.
- e. *Reports* The Fire Chief or a designee shall make reports on all fire calls at the next regular meeting of the Department.
- f. *Procurement* The Fire Chief shall be responsible for procuring all necessary emergency equipment and supplies.
- g. *Representation* The Fire Chief shall represent the Department at regional functions and meetings or assign a designee.

Section 2: Ambulance Chief The Ambulance Chief shall report directly to the Fire Chief.,

- a. *Appointments* The Ambulance Chief may appoint an EMS Supply Officer, an EMS Training Officer and other assistants as necessary.
- b. *Oversight* The Ambulance Chief shall oversee all EMS personnel, shall ensure that all certifications are current and shall be responsible for scheduling of personnel.
- c. *Training* The Ambulance Chief shall ensure that adequate EMS training is available to members.
- d. *Operations* The Ambulance Chief shall exercise general supervision of EMS operations, including maintenance of vehicles and equipment.
- e. *Reports* The Ambulance Chief shall make reports of all calls at the next regular meeting of the Department. The Ambulance Chief shall be responsible for supplying all documentation required by CT OEMS.
- f. *Procurement* The Ambulance Chief shall be responsible for purchasing all EMS equipment and supplies.
- g. *Representation* The Ambulance Chief shall represent the Department at regional EMS functions and meetings or assign a designee.
- h. *Meetings* The Ambulance Chief shall call and preside over monthly EMS meetings.

Section 3: Assistant Fire Chiefs The Assistant Fire Chiefs shall assume the duties of the Fire Chief in his/her absence, and assist the Fire Chief in all functions of the Department.

Section 4: Assistant Ambulance Chief The Assistant Ambulance Chief shall assume the duties of the Ambulance Chief in his/her absence, and assist the Ambulance Chief in all his/her duties.

Section 5: Captains The Captains shall assume the duties of the Assistant Fire Chiefs in their absence.

Section 6: Lieutenants The Lieutenants shall assume the duties of the Captains in their absence and carry out the training program with the Training Officer.

Section 7: Absence of Officers Absence of any of the above officers shall be filled by a next lower grade officer. There shall be no seniority recognized among officers of equal rank.

Section 8: Engineer The Engineer shall conduct weekly checks to inspect and be responsible for the maintenance of all apparatus and equipment belonging to the Department. The Engineer has the right to select one or more assistants. The Engineer reports to the Fire Chief and the Ambulance Chief.

Section 9: Communications Officer The Communications Officer or designee shall maintain and field test all radio equipment regularly. The Communications Officer or designee shall acquaint all members with proper radio procedure (see SOPs 2-6 and 2-7).

Section 10: President The President shall be responsible for all administrative functions of running the Department. The President shall preside at all regular meetings, special meetings and Executive Committee meetings. The president shall be well versed in Robert's Rules of Order and shall conduct the meetings accordingly. Working in conjunction with the Secretary and Fire Chief, he or she shall set an agenda for each meeting. In his/her absence the Fire Chief shall preside. The President may establish committees as he/she deems necessary.

Section 11: Secretary The Secretary shall record and distribute minutes of the Department's regular monthly, special and Executive Committee meetings. In addition, the Secretary shall notify all members of special meetings by mail or electronic mail, take attendance at each meeting, keep a record of the proceedings of the Department and report and answer all correspondence promptly. The Secretary shall notify, in writing, each member elected to any office if said member is not present at the meeting when elected. The Secretary shall see that any action of the Department is reported to any persons concerned. The Secretary shall maintain a list of those members who are active emergency members, active auxiliary members, and active junior members and those members who are inactive.

Section 12: Treasurer The Treasurer shall be responsible for the funds of the Department and follow all pertinent IRS regulations. The Treasurer shall establish a relationship with a local bank and get all necessary signatures on the Department accounts annually. The Treasurer shall receive all monies collected by the Department and shall deposit the same in such depositories as the Executive Committee shall from time to time designate. The Treasurer shall present an annual itemized report of all receipts and expenditures. The Treasurer shall report monthly to the membership on the budget. The Treasurer shall oversee payment of such sums as are ordered by the Department, provided that these orders are signed by the Treasurer and either the Fire Chief, the Ambulance Chief, President or Secretary. The Treasurer shall submit his/her books annually for examination by auditors. The auditor's report shall be filed with the Secretary. The President shall assume the duties of the Treasurer in his/her absence.

Section 13: Impeachment of Active Officers Twelve members may petition for impeachment proceedings against an active officer by filing a charge against him/her in writing with the Secretary at least one month before any vote is taken upon such charge. A copy of the charge is to be served upon the named officer by the Secretary at least two weeks before such vote is taken.

a. *Grounds for impeachment* An active officer may be impeached for the abuse of his/her authority

- or misconduct in his/her office.
- b. *Impeachment meeting* A two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a meeting is required to impeach an active officer.
 - c. *Results of impeachment* In the event an active officer is impeached, he/she shall relinquish his/her duties for that calendar year.

Section 14: Excess of Authority No member shall give any order at a call or drill beyond the authority granted his/her rank by these By-Laws, the procedures or policies of the Department. An order from a superior, even if disputed, should be obeyed and any protest shall be held in abeyance until the next meeting of the Executive Committee, when the matter shall be reported and discussed. All disputants shall be invited to attend and speak on their behalves. Any disciplinary action shall be taken in accordance with Article I Section 3 of the By-Laws.

ARTICLE IV: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee shall be composed of elected officers as set forth in Article V of the Constitution. A quorum shall consist of six members.

The role of the Executive Committee is deliberative and advisory. It shall discuss matters it deems significant to the administration of both the emergency and non-emergency operations of the Department and shall present its conclusions to the Membership (at regular or special meetings) for its consideration and vote.

The Executive Committee may approve Special Meetings called by the Fire Chief or the President.

The Executive Committee may make emergency purchases as set forth in Article XII, Section 2 of the By-Laws.

The Executive Committee shall annually appoint all non-elected officers, which shall include a Financial Secretary, a Quartermaster, a Firehouse Coordinator, a Records Clerk, a Technology Officer, a Senior Advisor and the Advisory Board for the Juniors an Equipment Loan Officer, a Communications Officer, a Bookkeeper, and an Auxiliary Coordinator whose individual duties shall be established by written policy or by the applicable Standard Operating Procedure.

Section 1: Subcommittee There shall be a standing Personnel Committee as set forth in Article V, Section 1 of the Constitution. The role of the subcommittee shall be confirmation of Tax Abatement Points per SOP 1-7.

Section 2: Meetings The Executive Committee shall meet monthly at a day and time to be set in January of each year. The EC must notify the Department of any change in time or location of its meeting as soon as possible after a meeting is cancelled and must give a minimum of 24 hours notice to the Department of the time and location of the re-scheduled meeting. Special meetings can be called by the President or Fire Chief as often as needed, but 24 hour notice must be give to the membership and the public. If the Executive Committee does not meet during any month, then any business that might have been discussed at the cancelled EC meeting may be brought to the regular Department meeting the following month for discussion and vote.

ARTICLE V: COMMITTEES

The President or Fire Chief may establish needed committees, as he/she deems appropriate.

ARTICLE VI: MEETINGS

Section 1: Regular Meetings Regular meetings shall be held on the first Monday of each month at 7:00 except if the evening falls on a legal holiday or other conflicting date, in which case the meeting shall be held the following evening.

Section 2: Special Meetings A special meeting shall be called by the Chief or President at any time upon the approval of the Executive Committee. A special meeting shall be called by the Secretary on the written petition signed by at least twelve voting members. Such petition shall state the objective of the meeting.

ARTICLE VII: ELECTIONS

Section 1: Election of Officers *Roberts Rules of Order* shall govern the election procedures. All elected officers shall be voted on separately. A simple majority of all votes cast by the members present and voting at the Annual Meeting shall be necessary to elect. When he/she qualifies, any member may serve in any office with no limit to the number of terms he/she may serve at any one time. In the event an officer resigns his post or is impeached mid-year, the Department shall hold a special election at the next regular monthly meeting.

ARTICLE VIII: QUORUM

Eight active emergency members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any Regular or Special Meeting of the Department.

ARTICLE IX: SUSPENSION AND AMENDMENTS

By unanimous consent of the active emergency members present and voting, these By-Laws or any specific article or section contained therein, may be suspended without previous notice. These By-Laws may be amended two times a year, in June, and the December meeting meetings, by two-thirds vote of the active emergency members present and voting, under the following provisions: that the proposed amendment has been presented in writing two months prior and notice has been sent by mail or electronic mail to each active emergency member that such action will be taken.

ARTICLE X: RULES OF ORDER

Robert's Rules of Order shall prevail at all regular, special, committee and Executive Committee meetings.

ARTICLE XI: NEW ACTIVE EMERGENCY MEMBER

A new active emergency member of the Department shall serve a one-year probationary period, during which time the probationary member shall be entitled to all the privileges and perform all the duties of regular member, except the right to hold elective office. Such time shall be credited to the member's term of service. Once a probationary member has attended certification classes in Airborne Pathogens, Bloodborne Pathogens, Hazardous Materials Awareness, as well as FEMA IS-100 and FEMA IS-700, he/she is eligible to be issued a pager by the Communications Officer, gear by the Quartermaster, and respond to emergency calls.

A probationary member must attend Department activities as follows: 40 calls, six training sessions, six Department meetings, and is encouraged to participate in Department parades, funerals, memorial services and any other scheduled or ordered Department functions. A probationary member is required

to review the Department policies and SOPs with his/her sponsor and complete and turn in the signature sheet to the Secretary.

At the expiration of the probationary period, the applicant shall be notified by the Secretary and asked to appear before the Executive Committee in order to qualify as a regular member. If the applicant has not met the requirements, the Executive Committee shall extend the probationary period by six months. During that time the applicant has another opportunity to meet the requirements. At the conclusion of the probationary period and once the requirements are met, the Executive Committee shall admit the probationary member as a regular member. If the applicant has not met the initial requirements, the Executive Committee shall request a decision from the Department at the next monthly meeting to accept the probationary member as a regular member or dismiss the probationary member

ARTICLE XII: PAYMENT OF BILLS

Section 1: Recurring Bills At the Annual Meeting in January, the Department, by majority vote, may authorize the Treasurer to pay any or all recurring bills as presented, when such bills have been properly signed by him/her and either the Fire Chief, Ambulance Chief, President or Secretary. Recurring bills shall be established by policy. All payments made in this matter shall be reported to the Department at the next regular meeting.

Section 2: Emergency Purchases The Executive Committee is empowered to expend not more than \$750.00 at any time for emergency purchases.

ARTICLE XIII: POLICIES

A book of policies shall be maintained by the Secretary containing all policies and procedures of the Department, such topics having been approved by two-thirds vote of the active members voting at any regular or special meeting.